

Present: Dwight Baker; Andy Bennett; Hans Brandal; John Coney; Dick Burkhart, Vice-Chair; John Jensen, Chair; Holly Plackett; Joan Sells; Mike Taylor

Excused: Ray Day, Jr., Dave Elliott, Sandy Paul-Lyle, Anirudh Sahni

Staff: Raj Cheriell and Rob Coughlin, Program Managers, Metro's Research and Management Information Section; Barbara de Michele, Community Relations Planner

John Jensen called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

TAC Convention

Members who attended the Transit Advisory Committee convention in Bremerton debriefed for the benefit of the group. All agreed that the most beneficial part of the convention was hearing from other transit agencies around the state. It was also agreed that next time Metro will put together a more polished presentation (with the help of staff) using Powerpoint. Next year's convention will be held in Benton-Franklin counties, which will entail more travel and cost. The group agreed that the chair and vice-chair (or two designees) should be sent to represent Metro.

Fare Structure and Ridership

Coughlin opened the discussion by giving an overview of Metro's research history. Metro has been collecting data for nearly 25 years. The data has been used to predict trends and is constantly refined to reflect the latest data. Coughlin emphasized that the U.S. has not experienced a gas shortage since 1979, prior to Metro's inception, and therefore severe gas shortages and/or high gas prices have not been tracked during this historical period. Coughlin noted that Metro's ridership has grown by 1% to 3% this year (final figures will be available in January) due to two factors: higher employment and the cost of gas. He provided the group with formulas by which Metro estimates future increases, emphasizing that the further out Metro estimates, the more it becomes an "art, not a science."

Cheriell gave an overview of fare policy. The Transit Fare Task Force set five goals for Metro's fares: 1) Maximize ridership; 2) minimize cost to consumers who are least able to pay; 3) reflect the cost of services in a consistent ratio; 4) keep the fare structure as simple as possible; 5) use fares to promote operational efficiency. Cheriell noted that about 5% of all Metro riders use the Flex-Pass, about 10% use the U-Pass; and about 35% pay cash. On average, about 60% of the riders are commuters and about 40% use the bus during non-peak hours. For every ten percent increase in fares, Metro has historically experienced a 1% drop in ridership. Currently, Metro is recovering 20 to 22% of its costs at the farebox. Metro expects that the SmartCard (ORCA) will actually increase farebox recovery at the "back end" of the process, by eliminating handling of cash, automating data collection, and producing efficiencies.

Both Coughlin and Cheriell answered numerous questions from TAC members. Jensen noted that the next Regional Transit Committee meeting, scheduled for October 19th, will take up the issue of possible fare increases.

TAC Meeting Notes

October 11, 2005

Page 2



King County

Letter of Advice: Waterborne Transit

Councilmember Dow Constantine requested that the TAC delay taking action on this matter until he has a chance to address them. By unanimous consensus, TAC members agreed to pursue the following actions:

- Invite Councilmember Constantine to the November meeting
- Assign Sells to write a paragraph concerning the ferry needs of Vashon for inclusion in the letter
- Continue to discuss mitigation issues
- Wait to see what happens with the Washington State legislature study
- Wait to see what happens with Initiative 912
- Move the November meeting from the 8th (election night) to the 15th to accommodate Councilmember Constantine's schedule.

January Retreat

De Michele will send out a request for input from TAC members on the date of the retreat, as well as ideas for keynote topic and speakers.

Committee Business

De Michele noted that TAC member Sandy Paul-Lyle will represent the group at the South King County transit sounding board, and that Dwight Baker and Holly Plackett will represent the TAC at the Eastside Sounding Boards. Both processes are getting underway in October.

Adjournment

Jensen adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m.